

In the Claims

1. (currently amended) Apparatus for treating a plurality of tissue specimens by immersion in a common liquid, the apparatus comprising a first structure providing a chamber for holding the liquid, and a second structure including a plurality of holding means for releasably holding the plurality of specimens, the first and second structures being relatively moveable in a direction having a vertical component between a first position in which the holding means are relatively close to the chamber and in which the second structure closes the top of the chamber to enable the plurality of specimens to be immersed in the common liquid whilst the latter is protected from the environment, and a second position in which the holding means are relatively distant from the chamber to enable the plurality of specimens to be loaded onto or unloaded from the holding means, and further in which the chamber is in the form of an annular trough; the plurality of holding means hold the plurality of specimens so that the latter depend from the their respective holding means at angularly spaced positions around a circle for immersion in the annular trough containing the common liquid; and the second structure includes a lid which acts to close the chamber in the first position and the underside of which carries the holding means.

2. (original) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first structure is stationary and the second structure is shiftable vertically with respect to the first structure.

3. (original) Apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the holding means include magnets to enable specimens, each provided with a metal mount, to be detachably retained on the second structure by magnetic attraction.

4-6. (cancelled)

7. (previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second structure is rotatably moveable around a central vertical axis, enabling specimens to be loaded onto and unloaded from the second structure at a chosen position alongside the apparatus, either by a robotic arm or a human hand.

8. (previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the apparatus has the facility to change the liquid when in the first position, enabling the specimens to be treated by different liquids in a succession of treatment stages, whilst retaining the chamber closed.

9-12. (cancelled).